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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9733  
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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 8327  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ OCT LIMA 4374  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 9665  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5041  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3739  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 009381

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/12/2026  
TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: SECURITY FORCES GOING AFTER EX-PARAMILITARY  
LEADERS; VERSION LIBRES UNLIKELY TO START UNTIL  
MID-NOVEMBER

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) Minister of Defense Santos said on October 10 that the time for the remaining ex-para leaders to turn themselves in was overdue. President Uribe authorized a USD 40,000 reward for anyone who had information on Castano's location. Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo told the Ambassador on October 9 the GOC security forces are looking for Castano, but doubted they will find him anytime soon. Meanwhile, Justice and Peace Law (JPL) Unit chief Luis Gonzalez told us October 5 that the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) plans to begin taking version libre interviews in mid-November. Of the 2,695 former paras on the JPL lists submitted by the GOC to the Fiscalia, only five have thus far ratified their intent to be processed under JPL. Moreover, the Fiscalia--due to para intimidation of local prosecutors--does not have criminal charges or investigations pending against several para leaders. End summary.

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PUBLIC FORCES AFTER PARA LEADERS STILL AT-LARGE  
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12. (C) Minister of Defense Santos said on October 10 that the time for the remaining ex-para leaders to turn themselves in was overdue. President Uribe authorized on October 10 a USD 40,000 reward for anyone who had information on Castano's location. Restrepo told the Ambassador on October 9 that he no longer thinks it is possible to persuade Castano to surrender voluntarily. He said the GOC had cancelled the orders suspending the arrest warrants against Vicente Castano and the other ex-paras who remain at large. Still, Restrepo doubted the public forces have the capacity to locate and detain these former para leaders any time soon. Police Intelligence analysts said on October 4 the police were looking for the paramilitary leaders that are at large, including Castano, Pedro Oliviero (AKA "Cuchillo,"), Hebert Veloza (AKA "Hernan Hernandez,"), and Miguel and Victor Mejia (AKA "Los Mellizos.") They had captured paramilitary

representative member Nodier Giraldo (AKA "El Cabezón," ) who was located in Bolívar Department, last week.

13. (C) El Tiempo reported on October 6 that twelve paramilitary leaders continue to insist that they would not surrender until the GOC offered greater judicial guarantees, including no extradition. From a clandestine location, Vicente Castano told Semana Magazine on October 5 he had two demands before he would turn himself in: 1) the GOC must sign a final peace accord that certifies all the points were agreed upon during the peace negotiation; and 2) the accord must be signed by a guarantor commission that will verify that the agreement is fulfilled. He also said he would be willing to negotiate an agreement with the USG.

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RATIFICATIONS SLOW IN COMING  
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14. (C) Only five of 2,695 demobilized paramilitaries on the JPL list have "ratified" their intent to be processed under the JPL or 975 Law, as required by Decree 2898. The decree states that paras on the JPL list had six months from August 29, when Decree 2898 was issued, to "ratify" their intention to participate in JPL. Of the five paras that have ratified their intention so far, three made their petition public: paramilitary representative member Salvatore Mancuso, and para leaders Juan Francisco Prada (AKA "Juancho") and Wilson Salazar (AKA "El Loro.")

15. (C) JPL Unit Chief Gonzalez explained the purpose of the ratification process was to allow sequencing of the list of

2,695 names make it more manageable. Thus far, at least 60 demobilized paras have told the Fiscalía they do not wish to be on the JPL lists. He suspected that at least 500 of the ex-paras currently on the JPL list would ask to be removed. Gonzalez said those who do not ratify their intent to be processed under JPL will instead be required to comply with the "version libre" requirement of the 782 Law.

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VICTIMS MUST BE NOTIFIED FIRST  
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16. (C) Gonzalez said the Fiscalía must notify potential victims before starting the version libre process. He estimated that it would take at least a month to inform the victims in each case. The Fiscalía has begun the process of notifying the victims of the three paramilitary members who have "ratified" their intention to be subjected to 975. For example, the Fiscalía has put ads all over Salvatore Mancuso's area of influence encouraging victims to come forward.

17. (C) Gonzalez complained the National Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (CNRR) and the Public Ministry have been unresponsive to the Fiscalía's call to assist in reaching out to victims. He said the Fiscalía does not have the financial resources or the manpower to identify and convince victims to participate in the process. It is going to be very expensive to go through this process for each individual case, but he recognized it must be done. Gonzalez asked the U.S. to help set up two call centers to advise victims on how to participate and to educate GOC officials in the field on the process.

18. (C) In addition to reaching out to the victims, the Fiscalía is also trying to construct secure facilities for the taking of version libres. They have to create separate, secure rooms where the victims will be able to watch the process through close-circuit television. Gonzalez estimated the first version libre would not occur until mid-November.

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MORE "CHEPES" TO COME?  
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¶9. (C) The press reported on October 5 that ex-chief of the South Magdalena Bloc and para representative Jose Maria Barrera (AKA "Chepe") had been released from La Ceja because he faces no pending criminal charges. Chepe also does not show up in the list of 2,695 paras seeking JPL benefits that the GOC sent to the Fiscalía. The MAPP/OAS representative told us they were surprised the Fiscalía did not have charges against Chepe, since the GOC released him from jail to participate in his group's demobilization in December 2005. Gonzalez said that since Chepe is not on the JPL list, criminal charges could be brought against him as part of an ordinary Fiscalía investigation. Still, in such an event, he said Chepe could still seek JPL benefits. There is no deadline by which paramilitaries must apply for JPL benefits or be subject to the regular justice system.

¶10. (C) Gonzalez warned that of the 2,695 former paras on the JPL lists, only 286 face pending investigations or charges. Moreover, of the 30 paramilitaries leaders who are being held at La Ceja, 17 do not have arrest warrants. These 17 leaders could leave La Ceja at any time, because they are there "voluntarily." The 17 includes Edward Cobos (AKA "Diego Vecino") and Fredy Rendon (AKA "El Aleman"). He explained that the Fiscalía could not issue arrest warrants without evidence. He complained, however, that local fiscales have more than enough information to charge these individuals, but are afraid to do so.

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